

Message Text

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PAGE 01 STATE 030249
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FM SECSTATE WASHDC
TO AMEMBASSY ROME

C O N F I D E N T I A L STATE 030249

EXDIS

FOLLOWING TELEGRAM FROM CAPETOWN DATED FEBRUARY 8, 1977
SENT SECSTATE WASHDC INFO LAGOS IS REPEATED TO YOU: QUOTE

C O N F I D E N T I A L CAPE TOWN 0187

EXDIS

LAGOS FOR AMBASSADOR YOUNG

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PFOR US XA VT
SUBJ: CATHOLIC SCHOOL INTEGRATION IN SOUTH AFRICA

REF: A) CAPE TOWN 0114, B) ZANZIBAR 0055, C) ROME 1939

1. I BELIEVE MESSAGE PROPOSED BY AMBASSADOR YOUNG WOULD
HELP REASSURE VATICAN OF OUR SUPPORT IF THERE IS SHOWDOWN
BETWEEN SAG AND CATHOLIC CHURCH OVER SCHOOL ISSUE. IN PRIVATE
CONVERSATIONS I HAVE EXPRESSED PERSONAL GRATIFICATION TO
CATHOLIC OFFICIALS HERE OVER INITIATIVE THEY HAVE TAKEN.

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2. SAG IS APPROACHING ISSUE VERY GINGERLY. CONCURRENT
WITH STRONG DENUNCIATION OF "UNILATERAL" DECISION BY
CATHOLICS, PROVINCIAL ADMINISTRATORS HAVE SUGGESTED
MEETING OF ANGLICAN SCHOOL AUTHORITIES WITH DEPARTMENT
OF EDUCATION OFFICIALS AND ARCHBISHOP BURNETT HAS ACCEPTED.
CATHOLICS HAVE BEEN TOLD BY PROVINCIAL AUTHORITIES THAT

IF THEY SO REQUEST, SIMILAR CONSULTATIONS COULD BE INITIATED. SO FAR WE ARE NOT AWARE THAT CATHOLIC CHURCH HAS RESPONDED BUT BISHOPS CONFERENCE NOW MEETING IN PRETORIA IS EXPECTED TO ADDRESS THE ISSUE.

3. WE HAVE IMPRESSION THAT SAG WANTS TO AVOID CONFRONTATION WITH CHURCHES OVER AN ISSUE ON WHICH OTHER SIDE WILL HAVE SUCH OVERWHELMING INTERNATIONAL SUPPORT AND SOME VERY ARTICULATE BACKING INTERNALLY. GOVERNMENT SEEMS TO BE PLAYING FOR TIME TO WORK OUT FORMULA, TAKING TOUGH PUBLIC LINE BUT PRIVATELY SHOWING WILLINGNESS TO TALK OVER ISSUES. WE CANNOT BE SURE OF OUTCOME FAVORABLE TO CHURES BUT ARE HOPEFUL THAT WISER HEADS WITHIN SAG COUNCILS WILL PREVAIL AS HAS BEEN CASE WITH CHANGES IN SPORTS POLICY.

4. WE WOULD URGE, HOWEVER, THAT OUR EXPRESSION OF HGIAUUFNLPOT BE MADE PUBLIC AT THIS STAGE BECAUSE PUBLICITY OF USG BACKING OF VATICAN ON THIS ISSUE WOULD:

- A) DRAMATIZE THE ISSUE GIVING IT AN EXPLICIT INTERNATIONAL DIMENSION;
 - B) STRENGTHEN THE HAND OF THE VERIRAMPTE ELEMENT IN CABINET WHO COULD THEN ARGUE THAT SAG MUST NOT BE SEEN TO BACK DOWN IN FACE OF "PROVOCATION" BY LOCAL CHURCH OFFICIALS SUPPORTED BY OUTSIDE PRESSURE;
 - C) CREATE AN ATMOSPHERE IN WHICH THE SAG WILL FIND IT VERY DIFFICULT TO CARRY OUT ITS APPARENT DESIRE TO FIND AN ACCEPTABLE FORMULA FOR PRIVATE SCHOOL
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INTEGRATION. BOWDLER UNQUITE VANCE

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